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WINNING THE WORLD

WHERE AND HOW THE AMERICAN BOARD WORKS

AMERICAN BOARD
OF COMMISSIONERS FOR
FOREIGN MISSIONS

14 BEACON STREET
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

THE prestige and success of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions are based not so much upon the fact that this is the oldest foreign missionary society in America and has been the parent of many other organizations, as upon the principles of spiritual democracy which the Board has followed through these many years. True to its Congregational origin and spirit, the Board has sought in all its fields not to superimpose on native peoples an American form of religion, but to "naturalize" Christianity by building up a self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating native church. Everywhere the emphasis has been upon the freedom, initiative and responsibility of the national Christians. This policy is now widely recognized as true and efficient.

In many of our fields the native Christians are not even aware of the fact that they are Congregationalists. They consider themselves simply Christians, and they are encouraged to claim and exercise the same right of private judgment in the matters of doctrine, policy and practice that Christians in America enjoy. This liberty has greatly commended the Board in nations like Japan, China, India, Mexico, Bulgaria, where the national sentiment is running strong. At the same time the name of the Board has proved a great asset, since it carries no implication of denominationalism, but suggests the projection into the non-Christian world of America's higher life. The character and ability of the Board's missionary force have also been a large factor in its success. No Board has maintained higher standards for missionary appointment than the American Board.

THE FIELD IS THE WORLD

Our task is tremendous; nothing less than the evangelizing and Christianizing of 75,000,000 of the earth's population; this great multitude, through comity arrangements among the Foreign Boards, being regarded as our exclusive field. In the furtherance of its task the Board is conducting twenty Missions, under fifteen different flags. Its fields are as follows:

In Europe: Spain, Czecho-Slovakia, Serbia, Albania, Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey.

In Asia: Turkey, Armenia, Caucasus, India (Bombay and Madras Presidencies), Ceylon, Japan, China (Provinces of Chihli, Shantung, Shansi, Shensi, Fukien, Kwangtung).

In Africa: Angola, Natal, Transvaal, Rhodesia, Portuguese East Africa.

In Oceania: Philippine Islands (Mindanao), Caroline Islands, Marshall Islands.

In Latin America: Mexico (States of Sonora, Sinaloa, Nayarit, Colima, Jalisco).

The Board has nearly 800 missionaries and assistants on its roll — ministers, educators, translators, social service workers, physicians, nurses, industrial experts, business agents, etc. Associated with these are some 5,000 trained native workers.

PREACHING, TEACHING, HEALING

The work represents practically every line of Christian and humanitarian effort utilized by the Church at home. It is classified under five departments: Evangelistic, Educational, Medical, Industrial, Literary.

Evangelistic. In all its history the Board never has confronted greater opportunities for winning multitudes to Christ than at the present time. The day of reaping has come and on most of our fields we are entering into splendid results made possible by 110 years of consecrated labor. In our ripest fields the problem is no longer that of winning a few converts here and there and leading

them to the Church, but of caring for the throngs of enquirers who seek Christian instruction. In one county in North China, where only two Chinese pastors are employed, 1,100 converts were made last year, largely from the more intelligent people of the villages and towns. In the Paotingfu field, North China, 4,000 applicants have been listed for church membership and are being organized into Bible classes, preliminary to baptism. Through the gifts of one New England business man, during five years twenty-six churches have been organized and 2,200 church members gathered in a section of the Province of Shensi, China, a region where previously no missionary work has been attempted. The most promising fields today are North and South China, the Philippines, South and West India, West Africa, the Transvaal, and Czecho-Slovakia.

Educational. The Board is one of the great educational organizations of the world, embracing as it does sixteen colleges, 100 academies, 1,200 lower schools, the total pupil enrollment being about 80,000. We cover the entire range of education from the Kindergarten to the University. The purpose of this vast system of schools is not only to raise up an intelligent Christian citizenry, but to provide well-trained leaders for every department of the Christian enterprise. Our emphasis upon native initiative will be in vain unless we provide capable native leadership.

Medical. The Board conducts 70 hospitals and dispensaries, and in recent years the medical arm of the service has been exceedingly prominent. In most cases our hospitals are the only modern medical institutions in the areas which they occupy. Several of them have an exclusive constituency of 2,000,000 people. Over 300,000 patients are treated each year. Highly valuable work is done in the way of sanitation and the prevention of epidemics.

Industrial. In regions like Africa, where barbarism prevails, our mission-

aries are obliged to build the whole structure of civilization, including the arts and trades. In all lands much is made of manual training, and generally speaking our education is more distinctly vocational and practical than in the United States, but always from the religious motive. The Board is doing a great work in promoting modern agricultural principles and methods and thus helping to overcome famines and improve the economic condition of the people. Experiment farms are conducted in Africa, India, China, and Turkey with excellent results.

Literary. Many consider that the next forward step in foreign missions is to be the wider use of the printed page. Mission schools have raised up such an army of readers that mission presses are kept busy supplying the needed papers, magazines, and books. The Board has always been prominent in providing scholarly men for the translation and revision of the Holy Scriptures. Correspondingly in all lines of literary output the missionaries of the Board have made their influence felt in conspicuous ways.

FINANCIAL

On account of economic conditions which all will understand, the cost of the work has increased rapidly in recent years. Speaking generally, we may say the cost is double what it was before the war. Even so, the work is conducted at an exceedingly low figure considering its vast extent. The expense of the regular work of the last fiscal year (apart from the three affiliated Woman's Boards) was $1,149,114.89. For this present fiscal year, ending August 31, 1922, the cost is estimated at $1,202,482.15, this without allowing for any advance in the work. Under the budget adopted by the denomination the Board should receive 25½ per cent of $5,000,000, or $1,275,000 annually, (exclusive of the Woman's Boards), to which would be added income from permanent funds, legacies, etc., enabling the Board to sustain its present work and meet some of its new opportunities. The strain at present is to meet current bills

and avoid debt. We are not asking the impossible. An average gift of five cents per week from each Congregational member would give the Board $2,100,800 per year. Since the cost for administration, promotion, and all home expenses is only about 8 per cent, donors may know that their money is being used to the best possible advantage. Through all its history the Board has stood for economy and efficiency. Its financial credit throughout the world is of the highest order.

THE NEW ERA

Following the war period the Board swings into a new era of great promise and power. The foreign missionary enterprise can no longer occupy a secondary place. Statesmen, world economists, captains of industry, and prominent educators recognize foreign missions as of primary importance in the rebuilding of the world. Increasingly they acknowledge that Christianity is the only solution of the social, economic, and religious conditions which distress mankind. Correspondingly the missionary finds himself enjoying a new status in these days. He has become a world figure; he is the true internationalist, the preserver of peace, and the promoter of the higher life of the world. With such opportunities opening before the Board, the problem is not so much on the foreign field as at home. The problem which presses is this: Will the churches sustain and advance their foreign work under these extraordinarily promising conditions? Will they make good the word of the Psalmist:

THY PEOPLE SHALL BE WILLING
IN THE DAY OF THY POWER

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